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ABSTRACT

Ohio Dominican College in Columbus is proud of its success in the graduation of African American students. While major resources have been expended at many institutions to enroll these students, graduation rates leave much to be desired. In the fall of 1990, the Lilly Foundation began to sponsor efforts to improve the graduation rates of African Americans at some independent midwestern colleges. Since 1980, Ohio Dominican had been concentrating on improving minority participation by improving the multicultural education and atmosphere at the college. After the Lilly challenge, the college focused on the following activities to improve the retention of African American students: (1) creating centers of influence where faculty take a leadership role in incorporating the contributions of minorities into their curricula; (2) promoting collegial interaction by providing eminent minority scholar mentors for Dominican faculty members; (3) preparing students in the freshman year to interact with students from culturally diverse backgrounds; (4) enriching the curriculum by celebrating a significant minority scholarly achievement annually; and (5) promoting collegial interaction by building a departmental network between the college and Wilberforce University, a historically black college in Ohio. These activities are undertaken to help move Ohio Dominican from a multicultural campus to a multicultural college. (SLD)

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DIVERSITY AND THE URBAN CAMPUS: THE OHIO DOMINICAN RESPONSE

by
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The challenge of institutions in the sixties and early seventies was to make higher education accessible to all. The result has been that most colleges and universities are *multicultural campuses*, enrolling students from many races and cultures. A critical task for the nineties, the task which this paper begins to address, is to become a *multicultural college*. This task calls forth a higher vision of campus climate; one in which the substance and style of the action at the heart of the college -- teaching and learning -- becomes more truly multicultural, better reflecting the rich diversity we value and which is present on our campuses.[1]

Recent years have seen an alarming increase in studies reporting serious problems in the urban school systems of our country. Attention, quite naturally, has been centered on K-12 institutions and the dire consequences to our society if the problems at this level are not corrected. Similar energies have not focused on higher education and, specifically, how the higher education system is serving African American students. Available information, however, suggests that the state of African American participation in majority[2] colleges/universities is not good. Storm warnings have been out for years. *USA TODAY* in its August 24, 1992 edition in an article entitled "Blacks find life at black colleges best" reports on a study by UCLA sociologist Walter Allen which concludes "The message that emerges quite clearly is blacks feel like outsiders at schools where they are a minority."

Ohio Dominican College is very proud of its success in the *graduation of African-American* students. We say "graduation" because large numbers of African American students are enrolled at "majority" institutions. Major resources have been expended to enroll these students, yet graduation rates leave much to be desired. The emphasis has been on integration and assimilation. But the real measure of an

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[1]We wish to thank Dr. Bruce Busby, Assistant Academic Dean at Ohio Dominican, for his assistance throughout the project which this paper describes.

[2]By "majority" we mean predominately white institutions.

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institution's success with this population is to see that these students graduate. Traditionally, African-American colleges/universities offer a nurturing and supportive environment often not found at the larger majority institutions. If majority institutions of higher education are to be successful in graduating minorities in the nineties, education and not integration-assimilation must be the focus of attention.

The model discussed in this paper deals only with African-American students on the college campus. This is because the Lilly Endowment, which is the major sponsor and initiator of this activity, delineated this population of students as the first to be served. However, we believe that the Ohio Dominican model is applicable to *all* minority groups.

To set the stage for our discussion of the activities that are going on at Ohio Dominican, let us begin with the challenge issued by the Lilly Endowment in the fall of 1990.

I. THE LILLY CHALLENGE

The following is an excerpt from a Request for Proposals sent out to four year colleges in the mid-west focusing on improving the campus climate through racial and cultural diversity.

> Research shows that there has been a marked decline nationwide of poor and minority students on four-year college campuses over the past 15 years. The decline has been precipitous and sustained, and hasn't, despite the growing awareness of the problem by leaders in higher education, been significantly reversed. The National Urban League's "State of African American America 1989" concludes that 30, 000 fewer African American students are pursuing a baccalaureate today than in 1980, an alarming decrease that has had an adverse impact on the participation of African Americans in graduate education and teaching, and almost every professional field.
>
> The tragedy of this decline is heightened when viewed alongside the simultaneous increase, nationally, of the number and percentage of African American students who have successfully completed high school. In 1976 the high school completion rate for African Americans was 67.5 percent; in 1986 it was 76.4 percent. Against this gain of almost 10 percent, the percentage of African American high school graduates enrolled in college decreased from 33.4 in 1976 to 28.6 in 1986. This sharp decrease was experienced by middle-as well as low-income African Americans and has been especially pronounced among young African American males. The whole doctrine of "equal opportunity for all" would seem to be under severe challenge in light of these startling findings.

While the decline in the availability and value of the Pell grants and other scholarship and loan assistance has contributed to the diminishment of African American participation on the college campus (even in commuter settings), sociological and human relations factors have played an equal, if not greater, role. Many colleges, it seems, have remained wedded to policies, practices and values that run counter to their stated quest for diversity; consequently, they have become difficult, at times inhospitable, places for minority students to pursue their education. As Charles Moody, vice provost for academic affairs at the University of Michigan, says about the college campus, too often "the climate says that whatever minority candidates have isn't needed and whatever they don't have is exactly what is needed."

We have reason to believe that this indisputable crisis in higher education exists in the Midwest region, as well as in other parts of the country. The disproportionate withdrawal of African Americans from the four-year campus experience is not a phenomenon that is just going on somewhere else where conditions are worse; rather, it is occurring in our very midst. As we look across the region (in virtually every state), we see examples of renowned institutions with African American representation of 2.5 percent, 2.9 percent, 3.3 percent, even 1.3 percent and less. There is something very sad--and surely both alarming and inequitable--about this, something that needs to be redressed in fundamental ways.

The problem, of course, runs far deeper than statistics can convey. There are, as we have been made increasingly aware, growing tensions on college campuses surrounding racial and ethnic relations. This lack of racial harmony contributes to the small proportion of minority students seeking higher education. Prospective students are reluctant to enroll in colleges and universities on whose campuses they receive the message that their contributions are not wanted.

All of us who are associated with higher education have been barraged and troubled by unassailable accounts of racial conflict and bitter enmity toward minorities. These are not isolated instances on just a handful of campuses, but rather pervasive experiences which, in their regressiveness, threaten the basic integrity and well-being of the academy. If they have not occurred and been repeated, on every campus, they are palpable on most--often in crude and blatant ways, sometimes at a level of subtlety that makes them more difficult to discern.

At the very least, minority student have to cope with what the American Council on Education, in its *Minorities on Campus: A Handbook for Enhancing Diversity* (1988) calls the "burden of adapting":

As it now stands, African Americans, Hispanics, Asian-Americans and American Indians bear the entire burden of adapting to the majority culture on campus. On a truly pluralistic campus, the burden and the rewards are equally shared.

The American Council's board has called for a rededication to removing barriers that stand in the way of minorities on campus. As its chair, Judith Eaton (then president of Community College of Philadelphia) wrote in her foreword:

> The ACE board also recognized that higher education's most important and productive efforts would be centered on our own campuses. In the last decade we have lost momentum in our efforts to ensure that minority

> groups are fully represented, welcomed, and involved on our campuses . . . We cannot resign ourselves to anything less than success in creating a truly pluralistic campus. The injustice is too great for a democratic nation to condone; the costs are too high for all citizens.

Our reason for sponsoring [this] program ["Improving Racial and Ethnic Diversity and Campus Climate at Four-Year Independent Midwest Colleges] is precisely to work, in partnership with independent midwestern colleges, to counter the "injustice too great for a democratic nation to condone." We view the problem in no less strenuous terms, and our commitment to pluralism leads us to offer a blend of challenge and support which we hope will make a difference across the region we seek to serve.

II. THE OHIO DOMINICAN RESPONSE

THE COLLEGE

Ohio Dominican College is a multicultural campus. In 1980 we enrolled 150 American minority students (16.3%) and awarded 27 degrees to minorities (18.8% of degrees awarded). In 1992 we enrolled 235 American minority students (15.6%) and awarded 33 degrees to minorities (12.2%). Our service to minorities has increased over the decade, but not as rapidly as our service to white students.

Our story of the eighties is one of focus and some success as a multicultural *campus.* A critical task for the nineties, the task which this paper addresses, is to become a multicultural *college.*

The heritage, location and distinctive educational niche of Ohio Dominican College, while not themselves the result of any single action during the eighties, create the milieu for success in educating minorities. Throughout the eighties we sought to foster and capitalize on the following:

* excellence in serving first generation college students (fewer than 30% of entering freshmen have parents with college degrees).
* nurturant campus environment (over 75% of students surveyed chose these descriptors: friendly, capable, helpful, caring, accepting, demanding, good-natured, hard working, religious, conservative, responsible, determined, honest and dedicated).
* focus on effective teaching strategies to promote student motivation and learning, a legacy of the parochial school

experience of Dominican sister faculty which has now become embedded in the campus value system.
* location of Ohio Dominican in a middle class African American residential neighborhood in a city with a large middle class African American population.
* curriculum combining lean job-related majors selected by most first generation college students with a broad liberal arts base (61 of 124 credits) built on a nationally recognized humanities core.
* foreign student enrollment averaging 10.9% of the student body over the past nine years, creating a rich racial and cultural mix.
* campus-wide appreciation of our Dominican educational mission ("Truth can be found in all cultures and traditions", . . .Ohio Dominican College [ODC] welcomes to its student body sincere seekers of truth whatever their age, sex, race, religious background, or ethnic and cultural heritage") -- from the ODC mission statement.

Specific actions to improve minority participation in the eighties included:

* 1980 - training admissions staff as financial aid counselors.
* 1984 - assigning our most able admissions counselor to recruit from Columbus Public Schools.
* 1981 and again 1990 - selecting as academic vice president a candidate from an African American college.
* 1986 - studying our successes and failures in educating minority students.
* 1986 - appointing a nontraditional African American alumnus as retention coordinator to improve our retention of all students, particularly minorities.
* 1987 - recognizing the African American Student Union and the Association of International Membership as student organizations on a par with Campus Ministry, Association of Resident Students, Association of Off Campus Students, and the four classes. This gave these organizations seats on College Council and improved access to student activity funds.

The impact of these actions can be seen in our minority enrollment and degree production in the following table.

Minority Enrollment and Graduation Rate

YEAR	% MINORITY IN TOTAL ENROLLMENT	% TOTAL DEGREES EARNED BY MINORITY
1982	13.9	11.6
1983	14.0	15.3
1984	16.5	8.7
1985	15.9	12.8
1986	19.3	10.7
1987	17.2	16.4
1988	14.3	15.6
1989	13.3	14.9
1990	14.4	14.3
1991	15.5	12.6
1992	15.6	8.3
1993	not available till fall1993	12.2

We measured the impact of our multicultural environment and campus diversity through an alumni survey in 1988 sent to the classes of 1982 through 1988. In May we asked the same questions of the 1991 graduating class. Results show that most graduates feel they benefitted from Ohio Dominican's diversity:

> ODC's multicultural environment had a positive impact on my education. 73.0% of 82-88 alumni agree; 84.5 % of '91 graduates agree

ODC contributed to my appreciation of individual differences. 81.6% of 82-88 alumni agree 90% of '91 graduates agree

ODC contributed to my ability to interact with culturally different people. 80.5% of 82-88 alumni agree; 85% of '91 graduates agree

ODC helped me develop an appreciation of differences among people. Very much - Alumni 52.3%, grads 64%; Moderately - Alumni 38.6%. grads 34%

A critical racial incident shocked the Ohio Dominican campus in December, 1988, which caused the college to take a new look at issues of campus diversity. A student, faculty and staff task force was convened early in 1989 to consider unity through diversity. The task force report of May 26, 1989 contained recommendations for admissions and student recruitment, student orientation, academic program, and continuing cross cultural dialogue. Several of the recommendations for admissions, student orientation and continuing dialogue have been implemented. For the first time, however, questions about minority perspectives in the academic program were raised by a broadly based campus group.

Thus the eighties ended at Ohio Dominican with reaffirmation of our mission to a diverse student body and renewed attention to matters of cross cultural communication, respect for differences and racial and ethnic harmony. We have a multicultural campus and we want it to be even better.

However, the self examination occasioned by the racial intimidation episode called forth a higher vision of campus climate; one in which the substance and style of the action at the heart of the college -- teaching and learning -- becomes more truly multicultural, better reflecting the rich diversity we value. It is our movement to this higher vision that we describe as the transition from a multicultural **campus** to a multicultural **college**.

THE PROGRAM

Why are so many of our colleges and universities having a problem with campus climate? Perhaps a former president of Berkeley's African Students Association,

said it best when she said "African American students don't feel they have a place in the university, in the classroom or outside it." Something good has been happening at Ohio Dominican College for a long time. We believe that our Dominican heritage and our nurturing approach to students' education have prepared us to take a leadership role in building a model campus climate. If we are to succeed, however, we must take the words of this student leader very seriously. Our African American students must feel that they *do* have a place in the college, in the classroom, and outside of it. Using our Dominican tradition and nurturing environment as a foundation, we are moving from a multicultural *campus* to a multicultural *college* through the following activities.

ACTIVITY 1: TO CREATE CENTERS OF INFLUENCE IN KEY ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS WHERE OHIO DOMINICAN FACULTY TAKE A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN INCORPORATING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF MINORITIES INTO THEIR CURRICULA.

ACTIVITY 2: TO PROMOTE COLLEGIAL INTERACTION BETWEEN SCHOLARS OF DIFFERENT RACES BY PROVIDING EMINENT MINORITY SCHOLAR MENTORS FOR OHIO DOMINICAN FACULTY MEMBERS.

A. Description

In recent years many colleges and universities have attempted to represent minorities in the curriculum by the development of African/American studies programs in which African American contributions, in a sense, have become a separate course of studies. Such a strategy would be inconsistent with the mission statement of Ohio Dominican College. Our motto is "to contemplate truth and to share the fruits of that contemplation with others." If majority students are to gain the benefits of the minority perspective, we believe that the contributions of minorities should claim their proper place throughout the curriculum and not be relegated to a "separate but distinct" area.

The reasons that minority contributions are not already imbedded in our curriculum are many. The primary reason, however, appears to be that our present faculty were not exposed to minority contributions in their graduate school training. Does this mean that there were no minority contributions to the Western Tradition? No! But these contributions, for whatever reasons, are not reflected in the training that prepares future faculty. If a graduate student is not exposed to minority contributions in his/her field in graduate school, the result is that he/she will continue the

cycle. The result is that many of the contributions of minorities have been "lost" or relegated to non-mainstream areas of study.

Ohio Dominican, through its own internal monitoring processes, has recognized the need for curricular change. As a result of the racial incident described above, the college convened a Unity Through Diversity Task Force to investigate ways of improving the campus climate. Many ideas were suggested. With regards to the academic program, the following ideas from the Task Force are pertinent to the present paper.

1. No single course can sensitize people to cultural and racial diversity. A broad spectrum of courses should address this area in one way or another.
2. The academic goal should be to appreciate other cultures through education.
3. Develop a cross cultural unit in the Humanities Program.

Students and faculty clearly saw in the spring of 1989 the connection between campus climate and the academic program.

B. Implementation Strategies

In response to the recommendations submitted by the Ohio Dominican Unity Through Diversity Task Force and to the challenge of the Lilly Endowment "to revise courses and the approaches to teaching to include a broader range of academic and cultural experiences in mainstream college life," we established an Ohio Dominican College Faculty Mentor Program. Through this program nine promising, young Ohio Dominican faculty, from various disciplines, are to be paired with nine eminent African American scholars in their own disciplines. These pairings will result in

a) a review of current courses to determine where important African American contributions may be lacking,
b) a reworking of course syllabi that reflect the contributions of African Americans to the discipline,
c) an examination of learning styles and pedagogical techniques that are effective for *all* students.

We have selected promising young faculty because as they rise in prominence on campus (become chairs, key committee members, etc.), they will be able to take the curriculum changes garnered through their association with their mentor and make these changes endemic in the discipline.[3] There will be three pairings for three years with a total of nine Ohio Dominican faculty being mentored. The 92-94 academic years will see the following pairings.

OHIO DOMINICAN FACULTY	EMINENT AFRICAN AMERICAN SCHOLAR	DISCIPLINE
Dr. James Schnell Assistant Professor	Dr. Jannette Dates Howard University	Communications
Dr. Mary Lee Peck Associate Professor	Dr. Vernon Clark Virginia State University	Education
Dr. Rebecca Rowoth Associate Professor	Dr. Freeman Hrabowski University of Maryland at Baltimore County	Math/Science
Dr. Darlene Erickson Associate Professor	TBA	Literature
Dr. Barbara Finan Associate Professor	Dr. Jamie Phelps Catholic Theological Union	Theology
Ms. Tina Butler Associate Professor	Dr. E. J. Josey University of Pittsburgh	Library Science

Other teams will be forming in areas that will include history/political science, philosophy, business, sociology and the fine arts.

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[3]We must remember, however, that wholesale curricular cannot be accomplished easily, if at all. Change itself is a process and is not something which happens at a given moment and ends at the same moment. Experience has shown that, when a faculty is presented with a mandate for massive curricular change, resentment and even hostility may follow. Frontal assaults on the curriculum have not been successful. Permanent curriculum change arises from the faculty itself and not as a result of administrative directive.

This approach to curriculum change is not confrontive (as is a mandate for wholesale change) and makes the faculty member a key player in the review and revision of the curriculum. The curriculum will evolve and the faculty will have ownership of that curriculum. In a very real sense, the Ohio Dominican Faculty Mentor Program is designed to continue the Ohio Dominican faculty member's graduate education. The African American mentor will fill in the gaps not filled in the regular graduate Eurocentric curriculum.

The African American mentors are on campus at least once a semester and are available to their faculty mentee, other faculty/administrators, and students. In addition to the contributions this program makes to the curriculum, the presence on campus of these African American scholars greatly enhances the intellectual life and integrity of the campus climate. The Ohio Dominican mentees also visit their mentor's campus to experience a different learning environment and to confer extensively with their mentors.

ACTIVITY 3: TO PREPARE STUDENTS IN THE FRESHMAN YEAR TO INTERACT WITH STUDENTS FROM CULTURALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS.

ACTIVITY 4: TO ENRICH THE CURRICULUM BY ANNUALLY CELEBRATING A SIGNIFICANT MINORITY SCHOLARLY ACHIEVEMENT.

A. Description

When the new student enters Ohio Dominican's campus, it is not enough that the grounds and buildings radiate a sense of personable warmth and welcoming comfort. The human and social climate must also insure that we say to all individuals from all groups, *here one group gains from other groups and in turn can contribute the best which each possesses.* Here all students will find that they have a place in the college, both in the classroom and outside it. The purpose of this activity is not to "give" our students a place, but rather to help them to discover for themselves that by means of the virtue of their humanity itself, they are empowered to create for themselves their own places, not only on this campus but also wherever the future takes them.

To begin that experience for new students, the college has established a course entitled "Unity in Diversity."[4] The purpose of this course is to introduce the students to the mission of the college and its special commitment to cultural pluralism; thus, from the beginnings of their undergraduate experience, Ohio Dominican students will be aware that they are entering into a heritage of choice, one which respects and values the role of pluralism in our curriculum and on our campus, and one which asks each of us to carry a commitment to this heritage as we extend in place beyond our campus and in time through our lives as responsible citizens.

A Unity in Diversity Team has been commissioned:

1. to design and implement the course Unity in Diversity
2. to develop a college-wide reading program which uses major texts written from minority perspectives
3. to develop and implement an annual colloquium presented by the author of the text or, if the author is not available, a recognized scholar of the work

B. Implementation Strategies

1. The Unity in Diversity Course

The course, Unity in Diversity, is being developed by two faculty: a "minority" female, whose discipline is teaching English as a second language, and a "majority" male, whose discipline is interpersonal communication and whose research and extensive travel focuses on the role of interpersonal communication in the recent student movements for political reform in China. Both have extensive experience in multicultural approaches to education.

This Unity in Diversity Team will working with appropriate faculty groups to develop and implement the Unity in Diversity course. Once the course has been developed, the faculty will begin training other faculty to teach this course. In the fall of 1993, the Faculty Develop-

[4]It is anticipated that when this course is fully developed it will become a general education distribution course for all in-coming students.

ment Committee will sponsor a day long examination of "Cultural Diversity at Ohio Dominican College."

2. The Unity in Diversity Reading Program

Using the Unity in Diversity course as its foundation, the Unity in Diversity Reading Program will utilize a common text each year to reinforce the course objectives and to extend those objectives throughout the college community. In this way our incoming students will first experience our motto by performance. The course will ask incoming students to contemplate the truth of the minority experience as encountered in their own lives and in the common text and, in turn, to share the fruits of their contemplation with the rest of the college community -- freshmen and new-comers teaching upperclassmen and faculty.

During each summer all faculty, staff, students, and incoming students will be invited to read the common text selected by the Unity in Diversity Team. The text selected for the 1993-94 academic year is Dr. Maya Angelou's *I know Why the Caged Bird Sings.* In the fall term as part of their class activities and obligations, the Unity in Diversity students will be asked to participate in the college-wide dialogues that will discuss this common text. These students will be trained to meet with focus groups of faculty, staff, and other students for activities that will include audio-visual presentations, guest and/or author lectures, and opportunities to review the prepared reading guides and to participate in the discussion of stimulus questions. The students will have opportunities to serve as presenters, facilitators, technical assistants, discussants, recorders, etc. The purpose of the focus groups will be to generate constructive ways in which the minority perspective represented in the text can enrich our campus climate.[5]

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[5]Interest from colleges/univerisites outside the Ohio Dominican community in this project has been very high. Local colleges/universities, private schools and businesses have expressed asked to participate. Details of this participation are currently being developed.

The Unity in Diversity classes will thus serve as not only an entrance for the new student into Ohio Dominican's heritage of cultural pluralism, but also as an initiation into the democracy of the community of learners.

ACTIVITY 5: TO PROMOTE COLLEGIAL INTERACTION BETWEEN SCHOLARS OF DIFFERENT RACES BY DEVELOPING A DEPARTMENTAL NETWORK BETWEEN THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT FACULTIES OF OHIO DOMINICAN COLLEGE, A PRIVATE MAJORITY COLLEGE, AND WILBERFORCE UNIVERSITY, A PRIVATE HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGE. BOTH INSTITUTIONS ARE LOCATED IN OHIO.[6]

This activity seeks to better the teaching of English composition at the college level by establishing a partnership between Wilberforce University and Ohio Dominican College. Faculty from both institutions are engaging in a series of conversations to explore their present curricula and to lay the ground work for a long term collaborative effort in the teaching of composition.

This activity seeks to:

a) build friendship and academic respect for one another's expertise and ideas;
b) help all instructors recognize their own biases
c) review the current courses offered in the departments (composition) for common themes, approaches to texts, and similar experiences;
d) rework course syllabi that reflect the contributions of minorities to the discipline;
e) examine learning styles and pedagogical techniques that are effective for *all* students;
f) establish a network of Ohio Dominican and Wilberforce instructors for on-going dialogue, exploration, and partnership;
g) identify useful topics for reading discussion and writing;
h) exchange actual student papers so that students at both institutions can hear each other's voices;
i) explore the issue of "black English" while learning to appreciate the music and vitality of the language;

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[6]This activity has been funded by a grant from the Council of Independent Colleges.

j) explore the power of the word in all rhetoric.

Like activities I-IV this approach to curriculum change is not confrontive (as is a mandate for wholesale change) and makes faculty key players in the review and revision of the curriculum. The curriculum will evolve and the faculty will have ownership of that curriculum. In a very real sense, the Ohio Dominican/Wilberforce Faculty Network is designed to provide on-going faculty development opportunities for the faculties involved. Faculty involved in this project will have the opportunity to a) explore their own curriculum offerings in depth using their counterparts in the other institution as a sounding board b) explore the issue of multi-cultural education as it pertains to the teaching of composition at the college level, c) examine the meaning of multi-cultural education at a majority institution and at a minority institution, d) examine various pedagogical techniques vis-à-vis their effectiveness with minority, majority, and mixed groups of students.

III. CONCLUSION

Higher education in the nineties, if it is to realize its responsibility of providing for our nation's future, must move our multicultural campuses to a more pluralistic sense of the collegium, the community of scholars as represented in the faculty, students and curriculum in which they grow. To do this we must revise courses and approaches to teaching to include a broader range of academic and cultural experiences in mainstream college life. The burden of this change must fall squarely on the shoulders of the majority members of the higher education community. At Ohio Dominican College we call this the process of moving from a multicultural campus to a multicultural college.